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Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development

Statement submitted by Soroptimist International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2006/100.

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Statement

Soroptimist International recognises that women suffer the effects of poverty more profoundly than men.

Soroptimist International fully supports the statements in reference to poverty contained in the Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and reconfirmed at the 2005 Commission on the Status of Women; the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Millennium Development Goals which seek to end extreme poverty by 2015.

Soroptimist International believes that the Millennium Development Goals are not achievable without a focus on ending the poverty of women.

The causes of poverty are complex and influenced by national and international situations of economy, war, trade, natural disasters debt, migration, health care and a multitude of social issues. Soroptimist International recognises that the solutions to eradicating poverty are equally complex and that, to be successful, all issues contributing to poverty must be addressed.

To end the poverty of women Soroptimist International urges governments to:

- Uphold the promises made at the 2000 United Nation's Millennium Summit and fulfil the commitments to achieve the eight Millennium Goals by 2015
- Ensure that women have equal access to resources, wealth and opportunities
- Empower impoverished women by including them in the review, revision and creation of governmental anti-poverty policies
- Promote economic opportunities for women
- Guarantee access to primary education for all girls
- Develop education programmes for women including literacy, job training, life skills and building self-confidence
- Make financial resources such as bank loans and savings schemes available to women
- Enable women to obtain affordable housing, have access to land and ensure inheritance rights
- Guarantee adequate and equal access to health care, recognising the special health needs of women including HIV/AIDS
- Ensure the human rights of all women, including migrants and ensure their protection against violence and exploitation
- Recognise and support the special needs of the young, elderly and disabled and provide education and work programmes to address their special needs

- Value the work of women as caregivers to children, the elderly, disabled and sick and distribute resources accordingly

- Encourage gender-based research into the root causes and solutions to poverty, disseminate the results and act on the recommendations

- Work with the United Nations, other governments and non-governmental organisations to ensure the success of the Millennium Development Goals.

For its part Soroptimist International will continue to work for the empowerment of women in all areas where women are in poverty or at risk of succumbing to lives of poverty and will co-operate with other non-governmental and voluntary organisations in monitoring progress on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.